

Learning through ceremony: a community-based approach to teaching Indigenous health

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<http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/treaties-in-manitoba/view-pdf-interactive-map-of-numbered-treaties-trcm-july-20->

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We want to share:

- How the relationship between Misipawistik Cree Nation and the University of Manitoba has evolved to provide learning opportunities for future health care providers that are grounded in Cree worldviews, are land-based, and holistic.
- What we learned



How it all began...

- 2017: U of M launched a two-week program
 - Students went to community in interprofessional groups of 3-6
 - Interprofessional collaboration was the Faculty's priority
 - Community decided "curriculum" with direction from university
 - Mix of health centres, nursing stations and land-based
 - RBC Experiential Learning Travel Initiative funded student expenses
- 2018: Misipawistik Cree Nation partners and hosts a group of 3 students

2019

Shallow Bay Sundance





2022 and 2023 Sundance and Wellness camps





It was amazing to see how significant the ceremony was for the people and their connection to the land.

With each ceremony done, there were many lessons to be learned, but one important lesson was how well the non-pharmacological intervention assisted the Indigenous people in healing and coping with their grief.



The most powerful experiences came from being involved in two Cree sweat lodges. These ceremonies were beautiful and moving, and I felt honored to be a part of them.

The value of such spiritual practice was clear to me and helped show me that there is a great need for our society to support people to look after their own and their community's spiritual wellbeing.

This weekend was one of the most memorable experiences I have had throughout my time at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences.

There were many powerful learnings that I would have never experienced inside a classroom nor reading through books.





An environment of love and support was fostered during the retreat, and it was beautiful to witness.

It was evident to me that a sense of belonging in community, language, culture and traditions have a huge role to play in healing.

The retreat also showed me how much I love the Manitoban north.

I love the beauty of the land, the quiet connection to nature I feel, and the pace of life there. I am profoundly grateful for having met such wonderful people.

I want to strengthen my connection to northern communities in the future and could see myself practicing up north as a physician.



What we've learned...

- Students value the opportunity to build authentic connections with the community, each other, and the land.
- Students' eyes are opened to the importance of protecting and promoting Indigenous knowledge and practices
- Communities benefit as the students fill helper roles to support ceremonies and retreats.
- Keys to success include having a community champion who is connected to culture and a university representative who is committed to centering Indigenous voices in healthcare education.

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